

REMARKS

Claims 1-29 and 48-56 are pending in this application. Claims 11-36 and 38 are rejected. New claims 53-56 are added herein. Allowance of claims 1-10 and 48-52 is gratefully acknowledged.

The Rejections Under Prior Art

1. Claims 11-22, 24 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over WO 00/15551.

WO 00/15551 discloses the preparation of inorganic oxides with mesoporosity or combined meso and microporosity. The process includes providing an aqueous phase having an inorganic oxide precursor such as a silica source.

Claims 11 and 16 are amended herein to recite an “inorganic source of aluminum oxide” rather than “inorganic aluminum source” to more clearly emphasize the distinction between the present invention and that of WO 00/15551. Applicants’ claimed method starts with dissolving an inorganic precursor of aluminum oxide, such as, e.g., a water soluble inorganic salt of aluminum, in a solvent. Specific non-limiting examples of suitable aluminum salts are recited in claim 12, none of which are disclosed or suggested by WO 00/15551.

While WO 00/15551 discloses a precursor for inorganic oxide, such as a silicate, the exemplified precursors themselves are organic. For example, the silica precursor disclosed at page 11 of WO 00/15551 is tetraethylorthosilicate (TEOS). The aluminum precursor is aluminum isopropoxide. WO 00/15551 does not disclose inorganic precursors for aluminum

oxide. While WO 00/15551 states at page 8 that “the aqueous phase may contain other metal ions such as derivable from an aluminium salt,” nowhere is it indicated that such a salt is inorganic rather than organic.

Accordingly, this feature of the claims is neither disclosed nor suggested by WO 00/15551. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

2. Claims 23 and 26-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over WO 00/15551.

Claim 23 is amended herein to recite an “inorganic source of aluminum oxide” rather than “inorganic aluminum source”. Claim 23 is submitted to be allowable for the reasons expressed above in connection with the rejection of claim 11-22, 24 and 25.

Claim 26 is amended to recite an aluminum species derived from a water soluble inorganic aluminum salt. As explained above, WO 00/15551 does not disclose inorganic precursors for aluminum oxide. Claim 26 and all claims depending therefrom are submitted to be allowable over WO 00/15551.

3. Claims 30-36 and 38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over WO 00/15551.

These claims are canceled herein without prejudice to further prosecution of this application.

Other Amendments

Claim 12 is amended to delete recitation to aluminum acetate, which is an organic aluminum salt, and therefore inconsistent with the limitations of Claim 11.

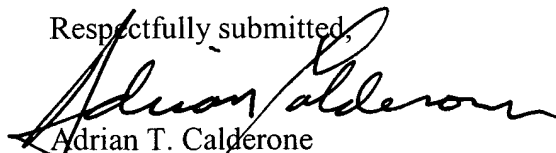
New claims 53 to 55 are added herein and depend, respectively, from independent claims 11, 16 and 23. Claims 53 to 55 recite that the step of adding the alkali is performed after the step of adding the pore forming agent. In view of the comments in the Office Action regarding the allowability of Claim 51, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are even further distinguishable over WO 00/15551.

Claim 56 is newly added herein. Claim 56 depends from Claim 26 and further specifies the water soluble inorganic aluminum salt is selected from aluminum nitrate, aluminum chloride, aluminum sulfate and aluminum perchlorate, none of which are disclosed or suggested by WO 00/15551.

CONCLUSION

For at least the reasons stated above all of the pending claims are submitted to be in condition for allowance, the same being respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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